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SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY

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JOSEPH ADDISON.

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## NOTICE OF ADDISON AND *THE SPECTATOR*.

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JOSEPH ADDISON (1672-1719) was the son of a clergyman, and received his education at Oxford. His poems, which are now little regarded, gained for him several political appointments, the highest of which was that of Secretary of State. His literary fame rests chiefly on his contributions to the periodical publications, *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, and *The Guardian*. In conjunction with Sir Richard Steele, a conspicuous Whig member of the House of Commons during the reign of Queen Anne, he started *The Spectator*, of which the first number appeared on the 1st of March, 1711. *The Spectator* was published daily, and each number was invariably a complete essay, without any admixture of politics. Steele and Addison were conjunct in this work from its commencement, and they obtained considerable assistance from a few other writers, of whom the chief were Thomas Tickell and a gentleman named Budgell. The greater part of the light and humorous sketches are by Steele; while Addison contributed most of the articles in which there is any grave reflection or elevated feeling. In the course of the work, several fictitious persons were introduced as friends of the supposed editor, partly for amusement, and partly for the purpose of quoting them on occasions where their opinions might be supposed appropriate. Thus, a country gentleman was described under the name of Sir Roger de Coverley, to whom reference was made when matters connected with rural affairs were in question. A Captain Sentry stood up for the army; Will Honeycomb gave law on all things concerning the gay world; and Sir Andrew Freeport represented the commercial interest. Of these characters, Sir Roger was by far the most happily delineated: it is understood that he was entirely a being of Addison's imagination, and certainly, in the whole round of English fiction, there is no character delineated with more masterly strokes of humor and tenderness. *The Spectator*, which extended to six hundred and thirty-five numbers, or eight volumes, is not only much superior to *The Tatler*, but stands at the head of all the works of the same kind that have since been produced; and, as a miscellany of polite literature, is not surpassed by any book whatever. All that regards the *smaller morals* and decencies of life, elegance or justness of taste, and the improvement of domestic society, is touched upon in this paper with the happiest combination of seriousness and ridi-

cule: it is also entitled to the praise of having corrected the existing style of writing and speaking on common topics, which was much vitiated by slang phraseology and profane swearing. *The Spectator* appeared every morning in the shape of a single leaf, and was received at the breakfast-tables of most persons of taste then living in the metropolis; yet it is stated, that the greatest number sold in this shape did not exceed sixteen hundred and eighty. It has since passed through innumerable editions.

Addison married the Countess-dowager of Warwick in 1716, and died at Holland House, near London, in 1719.

Dr. Johnson has said of him: "Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison."

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## CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
I. Sir Roger's Country Residence and Friends.....	5
II. Will Wimble, a Guest.....	8
III. The Coverley Ghost.....	12
IV. A Sunday at Sir Roger de Coverley's.....	14
V. On Exercise—Sir Roger's Hunting Trophies.....	17
VI. On Witchcraft—The Coverley Witch.....	18
VII. Sir Roger at the Assizes.....	21
VIII. On Party Divisions.....	25
IX. Sir Roger and the Gypsies.....	27
X. Opinions entertained of <i>The Spectator</i> in the Country.....	31
XI. Sir Roger in London.....	34
XII. Sir Roger's Visit to Westminster Abbey.....	38
XIII. Sir Roger at the Theater.....	42
XIV. Sir Roger at Vauxhall.....	45
XV. Death of Sir Roger.....	48

# SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY.

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS reprint contains those of Addison's own contributions to *The Spectator* which sketch the character, habits, &c., of Sir Roger de Coverley. A few other Coverley papers were written by Steele and Budgell.

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### I. SIR ROGER'S COUNTRY RESIDENCE AND FRIENDS.

HAVING often received an invitation from my friend Sir Roger de Coverley to pass away a month with him in the country, I last week accompanied him thither, and am settled with him for some time at his country-house, where I intend to form several of my ensuing speculations. Sir Roger, who is very well acquainted with my humor, lets me rise and go to bed when I please, dine at his own table or in my chamber as I think fit, sit still and say nothing without bidding me be merry. When the gentlemen of the county come to see him, he only shows me at a distance. As I have been walking in his fields, I have observed them stealing a sight of me over an hedge, and have heard the knight desiring them not to let me see them, for that I hated to be stared at.

I am the more at ease in Sir Roger's family, because it consists of sober and staid persons; for as the knight is the best master in the world, he seldom changes his servants;



and as he is beloved by all about him, his servants never care for leaving him : by this means his domestics are all in years, and grown old with their master. You would take his *valet-de-chambre* for his brother, his butler is gray-headed, his groom is one of the gravest men that I have ever seen, and his coachman has the looks of a privy-councilor. You see the goodness of the master even in the old house-dog, and in a gray pad that is kept in the stable with great care and tenderness out of regard to his past services, though he has been useless for several years.

I could not but observe with a great deal of pleasure the joy that appeared in the countenances of these ancient domestics, upon my friend's arrival at his country seat. Some of them could not refrain from tears at the sight of their old master ; every one of them pressed forward to do something for him, and seemed discouraged if they were not employed. At the same time, the good old knight, with a mixture of the father and master of the family, tempered the inquiries after his own affairs with several kind questions relating to themselves. This humanity and good nature engages everybody to him, so that when he is pleasant upon any of them, all his family are in good humor, and none so much as the person whom he diverts himself with ; on the contrary, if he coughs, or betrays any infirmity of old age, it is easy for a stander-by to observe a secret concern in the looks of all his servants.

My worthy friend has put me under the particular care of his butler, who is a very prudent man, and, as well as the rest of his fellow-servants, wonderfully desirous of pleasing me, because they have often heard their master talk of me as of his particular friend.

My chief companion, when Sir Roger is diverting himself in the woods or the fields, is a very venerable man, who is ever with Sir Roger, and has lived at his house in the nature of a chaplain above thirty years. This gentleman is a person of good sense and some learning, of a very regular life and

obliging conversation. He heartily loves Sir Roger, and knows that he is very much in the old knight's esteem, so that he lives in the family rather as a relation than a dependant.

I have observed in several of my papers, that my friend Sir Roger, amidst all his good qualities, is something of an humorist; and that his virtues, as well as imperfections, are as it were tinged by a certain extravagance, which makes them particularly his, and distinguishes them from those of other men. This cast of mind, as it is generally very innocent in itself, so it renders his conversation highly agreeable and more delightful than the same degree of sense and virtue would appear in their common and ordinary colors. As I was walking with him last night, he asked me how I liked the good man whom I have just now mentioned; and without staying for my answer, told me that he was afraid of being insulted with Latin and Greek at his own table; for which reason he desired a particular friend of his at the university to find him out a clergyman rather of plain sense than much learning, of a good aspect, a clear voice, a sociable temper, and, if possible, a man that understood a little of backgammon. "My friend," says Sir Roger, "found me out this gentleman, who, besides the endowments required of him, is, they tell me, a good scholar, though he does not show it. I have given him the parsonage of the parish; and because I know his value, have settled upon him a good annuity for life. If he outlives me, he shall find that he was higher in my esteem than perhaps he thinks he is. He has now been with me thirty years; and though he does not know I have taken notice of it, has never in all that time asked anything of me for himself, though he is every day soliciting me for something in behalf of one or other of my tenants his parishioners. There has not been a lawsuit in the parish since he has lived among them; if any dispute arises, they apply themselves to him for the decision; if they do not acquiesce in his judgment, which I think never happened



above once or twice at most, they appeal to me. At his first settling with me, I made him a present of all the good sermons which have been printed in English, and only begged of him, that every Sunday he would pronounce one of them in the pulpit. Accordingly, he has digested them into such a series, that they follow one another naturally, and make a continued system of practical divinity."

As Sir Roger was going on with his story, the gentleman we were talking of came up to us; and upon the knight's asking him who preached to-morrow (for it was Saturday night), told us, the Bishop of St. Asaph in the morning, and Dr. South in the afternoon. He then showed us his list of preachers for the whole year, where I saw with a great deal of pleasure Archbishop Tillotson, Bishop Saunderson, Dr. Barrow, Dr. Calamy, with several living authors, who have published discourses of practical divinity. I no sooner saw this venerable man in the pulpit, but I very much approved of my friend's insisting upon the qualifications of a good aspect and a clear voice; for I was so charmed with the gracefulness of his figure and delivery, as well as with the discourses he pronounced, that I think I never passed any time more to my satisfaction. A sermon repeated after this manner, is like the composition of a poet in the mouth of a graceful actor.

I could heartily wish that more of our country clergy would follow this example, and instead of wasting their spirits in laborious compositions of their own, would endeavor after a handsome elocution, and all those other talents that are proper to enforce what has been penned by greater masters. This would not only be more easy to themselves, but more edifying to the people.

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## II. WILL WIMBLE, A GUEST.

As I was yesterday morning walking with Sir Roger before his house, a country fellow brought him a huge fish, which, he told him, Mr. William Wimble had caught that very



morning; and that he presented it, with his service to him, and intended to come and dine with him. At the same time he delivered a letter, which my friend read to me as soon as the messenger left him.

“SIR ROGER—I desire you to accept of a jack, which is the best I have caught this season. I intend to come and stay with you a week, and see how the perch bite in the Black River. I observed with some concern, the last time I saw you upon the bowling-green, that your whip wanted a lash to it; I will bring half a dozen with me that I twisted last week, which I hope will serve you all the time you are in the country. I have not been out of the saddle for six days last past, having been at Eton with Sir John’s eldest son. He takes to his learning hugely. I am, Sir, your humble servant,

“WILL WIMBLE.”

This extraordinary letter, and message that accompanied it, made me very curious to know the character and quality of the gentleman who sent them, which I found to be as follows:—Will Wimble is younger brother to a baronet, and descended of the ancient family of the Wimbles. He is now between forty and fifty, but being bred to no business, and born to no estate, he generally lives with his elder brother as superintendent of his game. He hunts a pack of dogs better than any man in the country, and is very famous for finding out a hare. He is extremely well versed in all the little handicrafts of an idle man. He makes a May-fly to a miracle, and furnishes the whole country with angle-rods. As he is a good-natured officious fellow, and very much esteemed on account of his family, he is a welcome guest at every house, and keeps up a good correspondence among all the gentlemen about him. He carries a tulip-root in his pocket from one to another, or exchanges a puppy between a couple of friends that live perhaps in the opposite sides of the county. Will is a particular favorite of all the young

heirs, whom he frequently obliges with a net that he has weaved, or a setting-dog that he has made himself. He now and then presents a pair of garters of his own knitting to their mothers or sisters, and raises a great deal of mirth among them, by inquiring as often as he meets them how they wear. These gentleman-like manufactures and obliging little humors make Will the darling of the country.

Sir Roger was proceeding in the character of him, when we saw him make up to us with two or three hazel-twigs in his hand that he had cut in Sir Roger's woods, as he came through them, in his way to the house. I was very much pleased to observe on one side the hearty and sincere welcome with which Sir Roger received him, and on the other, the secret joy which his guest discovered at sight of the good old knight. After the first salutes were over, Will desired Sir Roger to lend him one of his servants to carry a set of shuttlecocks he had with him in a little box, to a lady that lived about a mile off, to whom it seems he had promised such a present for above this half-year. Sir Roger's back was no sooner turned but honest Will began to tell me of a large cock-pheasant that he had sprung in one of the neighboring woods, with two or three other adventures of the same nature. Odd and uncommon characters are the game that I look for, and most delight in; for which reason I was as much pleased with the novelty of the person that talked to me, as he could be for his life with the springing of a pheasant, and therefore listened to him with more than ordinary attention.

In the midst of this discourse the bell rang to dinner, where the gentleman I have been speaking of had the pleasure of seeing the huge jack he had caught served up for the first dish in a most sumptuous manner. Upon our sitting down to it, he gave us a long account how he had hooked it, played with it, foiled it, and at length drew it out upon the bank, with several other particularities that lasted all the first course. A dish of wild-fowl that came after-

ward, furnished conversation for the rest of the dinner, which concluded with a late invention of Will's for improving the quail-pipe.\*

Upon withdrawing into my room after dinner, I was secretly touched with compassion toward the honest gentleman that had dined with us ; and could not but consider, with a great deal of concern, how so good a heart and such busy hands were wholly employed in trifles, that so much humanity should be so little beneficial to others, and so much industry so little advantageous to himself. The same temper of mind and application to affairs might have recommended him to the public esteem, and have raised his fortune in another station of life. What good to his country or himself might not a trader or merchant have done with such useful though ordinary qualifications !

Will Wimble's is the case of many a younger brother of a great family, who had rather see their children starve like gentlemen, than thrive in a trade or profession that is beneath their quality. This humor fills several parts of Europe with pride and beggary. It is the happiness of a trading nation like ours that the younger sons, though incapable of any liberal art or profession, may be placed in such a way of life as may perhaps enable them to vie with the best of their family. Accordingly, we find several citizens that were launched into the world with narrow fortunes, rising by an honest industry to greater estates than those of their elder brothers. It is not improbable but Will was formerly tried at divinity, law, or physic ; and that, finding his genius did not lie that way, his parents gave him up at length to his own inventions. But certainly, however improper he might have been for studies of a higher nature, he was perfectly well turned for the occupation of trade and commerce.

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\* A pipe for luring quails into a net.



## III. THE COVERLEY GHOST.

AT a little distance from Sir Roger's house, among the ruins of an old abbey, there is a long walk of aged elms, which are shot up so very high, that when one passes under them, the rooks and crows that rest upon the top of them seem to be cawing in another region. I am very much delighted with this sort of noise, which I consider as a kind of natural prayer to that Being who supplies the wants of the whole creation, and who, in the beautiful language of the Psalms, feedeth the young ravens that call upon him. I like this retirement the better, because of an ill report it lies under of being haunted; for which reason (as I have been told in the family) no living creature ever walks in it besides the chaplain. My good friend the butler desired me with a very grave face not to venture myself in it after sunset, for that one of the footmen had been almost frightened out of his wits by a spirit that appeared to him in the shape of a black horse without an head, to which he added, that about a month ago one of the maids coming home late that way with a pail of milk upon her head, heard such a rustling among the bushes that she let it fall.

I was taking a walk in this place last night between the hours of nine and ten, and could not but fancy it one of the most proper scenes in the world for a ghost to appear in. The ruins of the abbey are scattered up and down on every side, and half covered with ivy and elder bushes, the harbors of several solitary birds, which seldom make their appearance till the dusk of the evening. The place was formerly a churchyard, and has still several marks in it of graves and burying-places. There is such an echo among the old ruins and vaults, that if you stamp but a little louder than ordinary, you hear the sound repeated. At the same time, the walk of elms, with the croaking of the ravens, which, from time to time, are heard from the tops of them, looks exceedingly solemn and venerable. These objects naturally raise

seriousness and attention; and when night heightens the awfulness of the place, and pours out her supernumerary horrors upon everything in it, I do not at all wonder that weak minds fill it with specters and apparitions.

Mr. Locke, in his chapter of the Association of Ideas,\* has very curious remarks to show how by the prejudice of education one idea often introduces into the mind a whole set that bear no resemblance to one another in the nature of things. Among several examples of this kind, he produces the following instance: "The ideas of goblins and sprites have really no more to do with darkness than light; yet let but a foolish maid inculcate these often on the mind of a child, and raise them there together, possibly he shall never be able to separate them again so long as he lives, but darkness shall ever afterward bring with it those frightful ideas, and they shall be so joined, that he can no more bear the one than the other."

As I was walking in this solitude, where the dusk of the evening conspired with so many other occasions of terror, I observed a cow grazing not far from me, which an imagination that is apt to startle might easily have construed into a black horse without a head; and I dare say the poor footman lost his wits upon some such trivial occasion.

My friend Sir Roger has often told me, with a great deal of mirth, that at his first coming to his estate he found three parts of his house altogether useless; that the best room in it had the reputation of being haunted, and by that means was locked up; that noises had been heard in his long gallery, so that he could not get a servant to enter it after eight o'clock at night; that the door of one of his chambers was nailed up, because there went a story in the family that a butler had formerly hanged himself in it; and that his mother, who lived to a great age, had shut up half the rooms in the house, in which either her husband, a son, or daughter had

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\* Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*, Book II., chap. 33.



died. The knight seeing his habitation reduced to so small a compass, and himself in a manner shut out of his own house, upon the death of his mother ordered all the apartments to be flung open, and exorcised by his chaplain, who lay in every room one after another, and by that means dissipated the fears which had so long reigned in the family.

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#### IV. A SUNDAY AT SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY'S.

I AM always very well pleased with a country Sunday, and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind. It is certain the country people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon different subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the village. A country fellow distinguishes himself as much in the church-yard as a citizen does upon the 'Change, the whole parish politics being generally discussed in that place either after sermon or before the bell rings.

My friend Sir Roger being a good churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing. He has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion table at his own expense. He has often told me, that at his coming to his estate he found his parishioners very irregular; and that in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock and a Common Prayer-Book, and at the same time



employed an itinerant singing-master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the psalms ; upon which they now very much value themselves, and, indeed, outdo most of the country churches that I have ever heard.

As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself ; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servant to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions. Sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing psalms, half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it ; sometimes, when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces Amen three or four times to the same prayer, and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews, it seems, is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. The authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behavior ; besides that the general good sense and worthiness of his character make his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.

As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side ; and every

now and then inquires how such an one's wife, or mother, or son, or father, does, whom he does not see at church; which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent.

The chaplain has often told me, that upon a chatechising day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a Bible to be given him next day for his encouragement; and sometimes accompanies it with a flitch of bacon to his mother. Sir Roger has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place; and that he may encourage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the church-service, has promised, upon the death of the present incumbent, who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.

The fair understanding between Sir Roger and his chaplain, and their mutual concurrence in doing good, is the more remarkable, because the very next village is famous for the differences and contentions that rise between the parson and the squire, who live in a perpetual state of war. The parson is always preaching at the squire; and the squire, to be revenged on the parson, never comes to church. The squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers; while the parson instructs them every Sunday in the dignity of his order, and insinuates to them, in almost every sermon, that he is a better man than his patron. In short, matters are come to such an extremity, that the squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half-year; and that the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation.

Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country, are very fatal to the ordinary people; who are so used to be dazzled with riches, that they pay as much deference to the understanding of a man of an estate as of a man of learning; and are very hardly brought to regard any truth, how important soever it may be, that is preached to them, when they know there are several men of five hundred a year who do not believe it.



## V. ON EXERCISE—SIR ROGER'S HUNTING TROPHIES.

HAD not exercise been absolutely necessary for our well-being, nature would not have made the body so proper for it, by giving such an activity to the limbs, and such a pliancy to every part, as necessarily produce those compressions, extensions, contortions, dilatations, and all other kinds of motions that are necessary for the preservation of such a system of tubes and glands as has been before mentioned. And that we might not want inducements to engage us in such an exercise of the body as is proper for its welfare, it is so ordered that nothing valuable can be procured without it. Not to mention riches and honor, even food and raiment are not to be come at without the toil of the hands and sweat of the brows. Providence furnishes materials, but expects that we should work them up ourselves. The earth must be labored before it gives its increase; and when it is forced into its several products, how many hands must they pass through before they are fit for use! Manufactures, trade, and agriculture naturally employ more than nineteen parts of the species in twenty; and as for those who are not obliged to labor, by the condition in which they are born, they are more miserable than the rest of mankind, unless they indulge themselves in that voluntary labor which goes by the name of exercise.

My friend Sir Roger has been an indefatigable man in business of this kind, and has hung several parts of his house with the trophies of his former labors. The walls of his great hall are covered with the horns of several kinds of deer that he has killed in the chase, which he thinks the most valuable furniture of his house, as they afford him frequent topics of discourse, and show that he has not been idle. At the lower end of the hall is a large otter's skin stuffed with hay, which his mother ordered to be hung up in that manner, and the knight looks upon it with great satisfaction, because it seems he was but nine years old when his dog killed him. A little room adjoining to the hall is a kind of arsenal filled



with guns of several sizes and inventions, with which the knight has made great havoc in the woods, and destroyed many thousands of pheasants, partridges, and woodcocks. His stable-doors are patched with noses that belonged to foxes of the knight's own hunting down. Sir Roger showed me one of them that for distinction's sake has a brass nail struck through it, which cost him about fifteen hours' riding, carried him through half a dozen counties, killed him a brace of geldings, and lost above half his dogs. This the knight looks upon as one of the greatest exploits of his life.

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#### VI. ON WITCHCRAFT—THE COVERLEY WITCH.

THERE are some opinions in which a man should stand neuter, without engaging his assent to one side or the other. Such a hovering faith as this, which refuses to settle upon any determination, is absolutely necessary in a mind that is careful to avoid errors and prepossessions. When the arguments press equally on both sides in matters that are indifferent to us, the safest method is to give up ourselves to neither.

It is with this temper of mind that I consider the subject of Witchcraft. When I hear the relations that are made from all parts of the world, not only from Norway and Lapland, from the East and West Indies, but from every particular nation in Europe, I cannot forbear thinking that there is such an intercourse and commerce with evil spirits, as that which we express by the name of witchcraft. But when I consider that the ignorant and credulous parts of the world abound most in these relations, and that the persons among us who are supposed to engage in such an infernal commerce are people of a weak understanding and crazed imagination, and at the same time reflect upon the many impostures and delusions of this nature that have been detected in all ages, I endeavor to suspend my belief till I hear more certain accounts than any which have yet come to my knowledge. In short, when I consider the question, whether there are such

persons in the world as those we call witches, my mind is divided between two opposite opinions; or rather (to speak my thoughts freely) I believe in general that there is, and has been, such a thing as witchcraft; but at the same time can give no credit to any particular instance of it.

I am engaged in this speculation, by some occurrences that I met with yesterday, which I shall give my reader an account of at large. As I was walking with my friend Sir Roger by the side of one of his woods, an old woman applied herself to me for charity. Her dress and figure put me in mind of the following description in Otway:

“ In a close lane, as I pursued my journey,  
I spied a wrinkled hag, with age grown double,  
Picking dry sticks, and mumbling to herself.  
Her eyes with scalding rheum were galled and red;  
Cold palsy shook her head: her hands seemed withered;  
And on her crooked shoulders had she wrapped  
The tattered remnants of an old striped hanging,  
Which served to keep her carcass from the cold;  
So there was nothing of a piece about her.  
Her lower weeds were all o'er coarsely patched  
With different-colored rags, black, red, white, yellow,  
And seemed to speak variety of wretchedness.”\*

As I was musing on this description, and comparing it with the object before me, the knight told me that this very old woman had the reputation of a witch all over the country; that her lips were observed to be always in motion, and that there was not a switch about her house which her neighbors did not believe had carried her several hundreds of miles. If she chanced to stumble, they always found sticks or straws, that lay in the figure of a cross before her. If she made any mistake at church, and cried Amen in a wrong place, they never failed to conclude that she was saying her prayers backwards. There was not a maid in the parish that would take a pin of her, though she should offer a bag of money with

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\* From Act II. of *The Orphan*, a tragedy by Thomas Otway, a contemporary of Dryden.



it. She goes by the name of Moll White, and has made the country ring with several imaginary exploits which are palmed upon her. If the dairy-maid does not make her butter to come so soon as she would have it, Moll White is at the bottom of the churn. If a horse sweats in the stable, Moll White has been upon his back. If a hare makes an unexpected escape from the hounds, the huntsman curses Moll White. "Nay," says Sir Roger, "I have known the master of a pack, upon such an occasion, send one of his servants to see if Moll White had been out that morning."

This account raised my curiosity so far that I begged my friend Sir Roger to go with me into her hovel, which stood in a solitary corner under the side of the wood. Upon our first entering, Sir Roger winked to me, and pointed to something that stood behind the door, which, upon looking that way, I found to be an old broomstaff. At the same time he whispered me in the ear to take notice of a tabby cat that sat in the chimney-corner, which, as the old knight told me, lay under as bad a report as Moll White herself: for besides that Moll is said often to accompany her in the same shape, the cat is reported to have spoken twice or thrice in her life, and to have played several pranks above the capacity of an ordinary cat.

I was secretly concerned to see human nature in so much wretchedness and disgrace, but at the same time could not forbear smiling to hear Sir Roger, who is a little puzzled about the old woman, advising her, as a justice of peace, to avoid all communication with the devil, and never to hurt any of her neighbors' cattle. We concluded our visit with a bounty, which was very acceptable.

In our return home, Sir Roger told me that old Moll had been often brought before him for making children spit pins, and giving maids the nightmare; and that the country people would be tossing her into a pond and trying experiments with her every day, if it was not for him and his chaplain.

I have since found upon inquiry that Sir Roger was several



times staggered with the reports that had been brought him concerning this old woman, and would frequently have bound her over to the county sessions, had not his chaplain with much ado persuaded him to the contrary.

I have been the more particular in this account, because I hear there is scarce a village in England that has not a Moll White in it. When an old woman begins to dote, and grow chargeable to a parish, she is generally turned into a witch, and fills the whole country with extravagant fancies, imaginary distempers, and terrifying dreams. In the mean time, the poor wretch that is the innocent occasion of so many evils begins to be frightened at herself, and sometimes confesses secret commerces and familiarities that her imagination forms in a delirious old age. This frequently cuts off charity from the greatest objects of compassion, and inspires people with a malevolence toward those poor decrepit parts of our species, in whom human nature is defaced by infirmity and dotage.

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#### VII. SIR ROGER AT THE ASSIZES.

A MAN'S first care should be to avoid the reproaches of his own heart; his next, to escape the censures of the world. If the last interferes with the former, it ought to be entirely neglected; but otherwise there cannot be a greater satisfaction to an honest mind, than to see those approbations which it gives itself seconded by the applauses of the public. A man is more sure of his conduct, when the verdict which he passes upon his own behavior is thus warranted and confirmed by the opinion of all that know him.

My worthy friend Sir Roger is one of those who is not only at peace within himself, but beloved and esteemed by all about him. He receives a suitable tribute for his universal benevolence to mankind, in the returns of affection and goodwill which are paid him by every one that lives within his neighborhood. I lately met with two or three odd instances of that general respect which is shown to the good old knight.

He would needs carry Will Wimble and myself with him to the country assizes. As we were upon the road, Will Wimble joined a couple of plain men who rid before us, and conversed with them for some time, during which my friend Sir Roger acquainted me with their characters.

"The first of them," says he, "that has a spaniel by his side, is a yeoman of about a hundred pounds a year, an honest man. He is just within the game-act, and qualified to kill a hare or a pheasant. He knocks down a dinner with his gun twice or thrice a week, and by that means lives much cheaper than those who have not so good an estate as himself. He would be a good neighbor, if he did not destroy so many partridges. In short, he is a very sensible man; shoots flying; and has been several times foreman of the Petty Jury.

"The other that rides along with him is Tom Touchy, a fellow famous for taking the law of everybody. There is not one in the town where he lives that he has not sued at a quarter-sessions. The rogue had once the impudence to go to law with the widow. His head is full of costs, damages, and ejectments. He plagued a couple of honest gentlemen so long for a trespass in breaking one of his hedges, till he was forced to sell the ground it enclosed to defray the charges of the prosecution; his father left him fourscore pounds a year, but he has cast and been cast so often, that he is not now worth thirty. I suppose he is going upon the old business of the Willow Tree."

As Sir Roger was giving me this account of Tom Touchy, Will Wimble and his two companions stopped short till we came up to them. After having paid their respects to Sir Roger, Will told him that Mr. Touchy and he must appeal to him upon a dispute that arose between them. Will, it seems, had been giving his fellow-travelers an account of his angling one day in such a hole; when Tom Touchy, instead of hearing out his story, told him that Mr. Such-an-one, if he pleased, might take the law of him for fishing in that part of the river. My friend Sir Roger heard them both, upon a



round trot ; and after having paused some time, told them, with the air of a man who would not give his judgment rashly, that much might be said on both sides. They were neither of them dissatisfied with the knight's determination, because neither of them found himself in the wrong by it : upon which we made the best of our way to the assizes.

The court was sat before Sir Roger came but notwithstanding all the justices had taken their places upon the bench, they made room for the old knight at the head of them ; who, for his reputation in the country, took occasion to whisper in the judge's ear, that he was glad his lordship had met with so much good weather in his circuit. I was listening to the proceedings of the court with much attention, and infinitely pleased with that great appearance and solemnity which so properly accompanies such a public administration of our laws, when, after about an hour's sitting, I observed, to my great surprise, in the midst of a trial, that my friend Sir Roger was getting up to speak. I was in some pain for him, until I found he had acquitted himself of two or three sentences, with a look of much business and great intrepidity.

Upon his first rising, the court was hushed, and a general whisper ran among the country people that Sir Roger was up. The speech he made was so little to the purpose that I shall not trouble my readers with an account of it ; and I believe was not so much designed by the knight himself to inform the court, as to give him a figure in my eye, and keep up his credit in the country.

I was highly delighted when the court rose to see the gentlemen of the country gathering about my old friend, and striving who should compliment him most ; at the same time that the ordinary people gazed upon him at a distance, not a little admiring his courage, that was not afraid to speak to the judge.

In our return home we met with a very odd accident which I cannot forbear relating, because it shows how desirous all who know Sir Roger are of giving him marks of their esteem



When we were arrived upon the verge of his estate, we stopped at a little inn to rest ourselves and our horses. The man of the house had, it seems, been formerly a servant in the knight's family; and to do honor to his old master, had some time since, unknown to Sir Roger, put him up in a sign-post before the door; so that the knight's head had hung out upon the road about a week before he himself knew anything of the matter. As soon as Sir Roger was acquainted with it, finding that his servant's indiscretion proceeded wholly from affection and good-will, he only told him that he had made him too high a compliment; and when the fellow seemed to think that could hardly be, added, with a more decisive look, that it was too great an honor for any man under a duke; but told him, at the same time, that it might be altered with a very few touches, and that he himself would be at the charge of it. Accordingly, they got a painter by the knight's directions to add a pair of whiskers to the face, and, by a little aggravation of the features, to change it into the Saracen's head. I should not have known this story had not the innkeeper, upon Sir Roger's alighting, told him, in my hearing, that his honor's head was brought back last night with the alterations that he had ordered to be made in it. Upon this my friend, with his usual cheerfulness, related the particulars above mentioned, and ordered the head to be brought into the room. I could not forbear discovering greater expressions of mirth than ordinary upon the appearance of this monstrous face, under which, notwithstanding it was made to frown and stare in a most extraordinary manner, I could still discover a distant resemblance of my old friend. Sir Roger, upon seeing me laugh, desired me to tell him truly if I thought it possible for people to know him in that disguise. I at first kept my usual silence; but upon the knight's conjuring me to tell him whether it was not still more like himself than a Saracen, I composed my countenance in the best manner I could, and replied that "much might be said on both sides."

These several adventures, with the knight's behavior in them, gave me as pleasant a day as ever I met with in any of my travels.

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## VIII. ON PARTY DIVISIONS.

MY worthy friend Sir Roger, when we are talking of the malice of parties, very frequently tells us an accident that happened to him when he was a school-boy, which was at the time when the feuds ran high between the Roundheads and Cavaliers. This worthy knight, being then but a stripling, had occasion to inquire which was the way to St. Anne's Lane, upon which the person whom he spoke to, instead of answering his question, called him a young popish cur, and asked him who had made Anne a saint. The boy, being in some confusion, inquired of the next he met which was the way to Anne's Lane, but was called a prick-eared cur for his pains, and instead of being shown the way, was told that she had been a saint before he was born, and would be one after he was hanged. "Upon this," says Sir Roger, "I did not think fit to repeat the former question, but going into every lane of the neighborhood, asked what they called the name of that lane." By which ingenious artifice he found out the place he inquired after, without giving offense to any party. Sir Roger generally closes this narrative with reflections on the mischief that parties do in the country, how they spoil good neighborhood, and make honest gentlemen hate one another; besides that they manifestly tend to the prejudice of the land-tax, and the destruction of the game.

There cannot a greater judgment befall a country than such a dreadful spirit of division as rends a government into two distinct people, and makes them greater strangers, and more averse to one another, than if they were actually two different nations. The effects of such a division are pernicious to the last degree, not only with regard to those advantages which they give the common enemy, but to those private evils which they produce in the heart of almost every par-



ticular person. This influence is very fatal both to men's morals and their understandings; it sinks the virtue of a nation, and not only so, but destroys even common-sense.

A furious party spirit, when it rages in its full violence, exerts itself in civil war and bloodshed; and when it is under its greatest restraints, naturally breaks out in falsehood, detraction, calumny, and a partial administration of justice. In a word, it fills a nation with spleen and rancor, and extinguishes all the seeds of good nature, compassion, and humanity.

I do not know whether I have observed in any of my former papers that my friends Sir Roger de Coverley and Sir Andrew Freeport are of different principles, the first of them inclined to the landed, and the other to the moneyed interest. This humor is so moderate in each of them, that it proceeds no further than to an agreeable raillery, which very often diverts the rest of the club. I find, however, that the knight is a much stronger Tory in the country than in town, which, as he has told me in my ear, is absolutely necessary for the keeping of his interest. In all our journey from London to his house we did not so much as bait at a Whig inn; or if by chance the coachman stopped at a wrong place, one of Sir Roger's servants would ride up to his master full speed, and whisper to him that the master of the house was against such an one in the last election. This often betrayed us into hard beds and bad cheer, for we were not so inquisitive about the inn as the innkeeper; and, provided our landlord's principles were sound, did not take any notice of the staleness of his provisions. This I found still the more inconvenient, because the better the host was, the worse generally were his accommodations; the fellow knowing very well that those who were his friends would take up with coarse diet and an hard lodging. For these reasons, all the while I was upon the road I dreaded entering into a house of any one that Sir Roger had applauded for an honest man.



Since my stay at Sir Roger's in the country, I daily find more instances of this narrow party humor. Being upon the bowling-green at a neighboring market town the other day (for that is the place where the gentlemen of one side meet once a week), I observed a stranger among them, of a better presence and genteeler behavior than ordinary; but was much surprised, that notwithstanding he was a very fair better, nobody would take him up. But upon inquiry I found that he was one who had given a disagreeable vote in a former parliament, for which reason there was not a man upon that bowling-green who would have so much correspondence with him as to win his money off him.

Among other instances of this nature, I must not omit one which concerns myself. Will Wimble was the other day relating several strange stories that he had picked up, nobody knows where, of a certain great man; and upon my staring at him, as one that was surprised to hear such things in the country, which had never been so much as whispered in the town, Will stopped short in the thread of his discourse, and after dinner asked my friend Sir Roger in his ear if he was sure that I was not a fanatic.

It gives me a serious concern to see such a spirit of dissension in the country, not only as it destroys virtue and common sense, and renders us in a manner barbarians toward one another, but as it perpetuates our animosities, widens our breaches, and transmits our present passions and prejudices to our posterity. For my own part, I am sometimes afraid that I discover the seeds of a civil war in these our divisions, and therefore cannot but bewail, as in their first principles, the miseries and calamities of our children.

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#### IX. SIR ROGER AND THE GYPSIES.

As I was yesterday riding out in the fields with my friend Sir Roger, we saw at a little distance from us a troop of gypsies. Upon the first discovery of them, my friend was in

some doubt whether he should not exert the justice of peace upon such a band of lawless vagrants; but not having his clerk with him, who is a necessary counselor on these occasions, and fearing that his poultry might fare the worse for it, he let the thought drop; but, at the same time, gave me a particular account of the mischiefs they do in the country, in stealing people's goods, and spoiling their servants, "If a stray piece of linen hangs upon a hedge," says Sir Roger, "they are sure to have it; if a hog loses his way in the fields, it is ten to one but he becomes their prey; our geese cannot live in peace for them; if a man prosecutes them with severity, his hen-roost is sure to pay for it. They generally straggle into these parts about this time of the year, and set the heads of our servant-maids so agog for husbands, that we do not expect to have any business done as it should be, whilst they are in the country. I have an honest dairy-maid who crosses their hands with a piece of silver every summer, and never fails being promised the handsomest young fellow in the parish for her pains. Your friend the butler has been fool enough to be seduced by them; and though he is sure to lose a knife, a fork, or a spoon, every time his fortune is told him, generally shuts himself up in the pantry with an old gypsy for about half an hour once in a twelvemonth. Sweethearts are the things they live upon, which they bestow very plentifully upon all those that apply themselves to them. You see now and then some handsome young jades among them; the sluts\* have very often white teeth and black eyes."

Sir Roger observing that I listened with great attention to his account of a people who were so entirely new to me, told me, that if I would, they should tell us our fortunes. As I was very well pleased with the knight's proposal, we rid up and communicated our hands to them. A Cassandra † of

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\* **Slut.**—An untidy woman; a slattern.—*Webster.*

† A prophetess, from Cassandra, daughter of Priam, king of Troy, who received from the god Apollo the power of knowing futurity.



the crew, after having examined my lines very diligently told me some particulars which I do not think proper to relate. My friend Sir Roger alighted from his horse, and exposing his palm to two or three that stood by him, they crumpled it into all shapes, and diligently scanned every wrinkle that could be made in it, when one of them, who was older and more sunburnt than the rest, told him that he had a widow in his line of life. Upon which the knight cried: "Go, go, you are an idle baggage;" and at the same time smiled upon me. The gypsy, finding he was not displeased in the heart, told him, after a further inquiry into his hand, that his true love was constant, and that she should dream of him to-night. My old friend cried "Pish!" and bid her go on. The gypsy told him that he was a bachelor, but would not be so long; and that he was dearer to somebody than he thought. The knight still repeated, she was an idle baggage, and bid her go on. "Ah, master," says the gypsy, "that roguish leer of yours makes a pretty woman's heart ache; you ha'n't got that simper about the mouth for nothing." The uncouth gibberish with which all this was uttered, like the darkness of an oracle, made us the more attentive to it. To be short, the knight left the money with her that he had crossed her hand with, and got up again on his horse.

As we were riding away, Sir Roger told me that he knew several sensible people who believed these gypsies now and then foretold very strange things; and for half an hour together appeared more jocund than ordinary. In the height of his good humor, meeting a common beggar upon the road, who was no conjurer, as he went to relieve him, he found his pocket was picked—that being a kind of palmistry at which this race of vermin are very dexterous.

I might here entertain my readers with historical remarks on this idle profligate people, who infest all the countries of Europe, and live in the midst of governments in a kind of commonwealth by themselves. But instead of entering into



observations of this nature, I shall fill the remaining part of my paper with a story, which is still fresh in Holland, and was printed in one of our monthly accounts about twenty years ago. "As the trekschuyt, or hackney-boat, which carries passengers from Leyden to Amsterdam, was putting off, a boy running along the side of the canal desired to be taken in, which the master of the boat refused, because the lad had not money enough to pay the usual fare. An eminent merchant being pleased with the looks of the boy, and secretly touched with compassion toward him, paid the money for him and ordered him to be taken on board. Upon talking with him afterward, he found that he could speak readily in three or four languages, and learned upon further examination that he had been stolen away when he was a child by a gypsy, and had rambled ever since with a gang of those strollers up and down several parts of Europe. It happened that the merchant, whose heart seems to have inclined toward the boy by a secret kind of instinct, had himself lost a child some years before. The parents, after a long search for him, gave him for drowned in one of the canals with which that country abounds; and the mother was so afflicted at the loss of a fine boy, who was her only son, that she died for grief of it. Upon laying together all particulars, and examining the several moles and marks by which the mother used to describe the child when he was first missing, the boy proved to be the son of the merchant whose heart had so unaccountably melted at the sight of him. The lad was very well pleased to find a father who was so rich, and likely to leave him a good estate; the father, on the other hand, was not a little delighted to see a son return to him whom he had given up for lost, with such a strength of constitution, sharpness of understanding, and skill in languages." Here the printed story leaves off; but if I may give credit to reports, our linguist, having received such extraordinary rudiments toward a good education, was afterward trained up in everything that becomes a gentle-

man; wearing off by little and little all the vicious habits and practices that he had been used to in the course of his peregrinations. Nay, it is said that he has since been employed in foreign courts upon national business, with great reputation to himself and honor to those who sent him, and that he has visited several countries as a public minister in which he formerly wandered as a gypsy.

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X. OPINIONS ENTERTAINED OF "THE SPECTATOR" IN THE COUNTRY.

IT is usual for a man who loves country sports to preserve the game in his own grounds, and divert himself upon those that belong to his neighbor. My friend Sir Roger generally goes two or three miles from his house, and gets into the frontiers of his estate, before he beats about in search of a hare or partridge, on purpose to spare his own fields, where he is always sure of finding diversion, when the worst comes to the worst. By this means the breed about his house has time to increase and multiply, besides that the sport is the more agreeable where the game is harder to come at, and where it does not lie so thick as to produce any perplexity or confusion in the pursuit. For these reasons, the country gentleman, like the fox, seldom preys near his own home.

In the same manner, I have made a month's excursion out of the town, which is the great field of game for sportsmen of my species, to try my fortune in the country, where I have started several subjects, and hunted them down, with some pleasure to myself, and I hope to others. I am here forced to use a great deal of diligence before I can spring anything to my mind, whereas in town, while I am following one character, it is ten to one but I am crossed in my way by another, and put up such a variety of old creatures in both sexes, that they foil the scent of one another, and puzzle the chase. My greatest difficulty in the country is to find sport, and in town to choose it. In the mean time, as I have given



a whole month's rest to the cities of London and Westminster, I promise myself abundance of new game upon my return thither.

It is indeed high time for me to leave the country, since I find the whole neighborhood begin to grow very inquisitive after my name and character: my love of solitude, taciturnity, and particular way of life, having raised a great curiosity in all these parts.

The notions which have been framed of me are various: some look upon me as very proud, some as very modest, and some as very melancholy. Will Wimble, as my friend the butler tells me, observing me very much alone, and extremely silent when I am in company, is afraid I have killed a man. The country people seem to suspect me for a conjurer; and some of them, hearing of the visit which I made to Moll White, will needs have it that Sir Roger has brought down a cunning man with him, to cure the old woman, and free the country from her charms. So that the character which I go under in part of the neighborhood, is what they here call a white witch.\*

A justice of peace, who lives about five miles off, and is not of Sir Roger's party, has, it seems, said twice or thrice at his table, that he wishes Sir Roger does not harbor a Jesuit in his house, and that he thinks the gentlemen of the country would do very well to make me give some account of myself.

On the other side, some of Sir Roger's friends are afraid the old knight is imposed upon by a designing fellow; and as they have heard that he converses very promiscuously when he is in town, do not know but he has brought down with him some discarded Whig, that is sullen, and says nothing because he is out of place.

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\* "According to popular belief, there were three classes of witches—white, black, and gray. The first helped, but could not hurt; the second the reverse; and the third did both. White spirits caused stolen goods to be restored; they charmed away diseases, and did other beneficent acts; neither did a little harmless mischief lie wholly out of their way."—*Sir Roger De Coverley, with notes by W. H. Wills.*



Such is the variety of opinions which are here entertained of me, so that I pass among some for a disaffected person and among others for a popish priest; among some for a wizard, and among others for a murderer; and all this for no other reason that I can imagine, but because I do not hoot and halloo, and make a noise. It is true my friend Sir Roger tells them that it is my way, and that I am only a philosopher; but this will not satisfy them. They think there is more in me than he discovers, and that I do not hold my tongue for nothing.

For these and other reasons I shall set out for London to-morrow, having found by experience that the country is not a place for a person of my temper, who does not love jollity, and what they call good neighborhood. A man that is out of humor when an unexpected guest breaks in upon him, and does not care for sacrificing an afternoon to every chance-comer, that will be the master of his own time, and the pursuer of his own inclinations, makes but a very unsociable figure in this kind of life. I shall therefore retire into the town, if I may make use of that phrase, and get into the crowd again as fast as I can, in order to be alone. I can there raise what speculations I please upon others, without being observed myself, and at the same time enjoy all the advantages of company with all the privileges of solitude. In the mean while, to finish the month, and conclude these my rural speculations, I shall here insert a letter from my friend Will Honeycomb, who has not lived a month for these forty years out of the smoke of London, and rallies me after his way upon my country life.

“DEAR SPEC.—I suppose this letter will find thee picking of daisies, or smelling to a lock of hay, or passing away thy time in some innocent country diversion of the like nature. I have, however, orders from the club to summon thee up to town, being all of us cursedly afraid thou wilt not be able to relish our company, after thy conversations with Moll White

and Will Wimble. Pr'ythee don't send us up any more stories of a cock and a bull, nor frighten the town with spirits and witches. Thy speculations begin to smell confoundedly of woods and meadows. If thou dost not come up quickly, we shall conclude that thou art in love with one of Sir Roger's dairy-maids. Service to the knight. Sir Andrew is grown the cock of the club since he left us, and if he does not return quickly, will make every mother's son of us commonwealth's men.

"DEAR SPEC., thine eternally,

"WILL HONEYCOMB."

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#### XI. SIR ROGER IN LONDON.

I WAS this morning surprised with a great knocking at the door, when my landlady's daughter came up to me, and told me there was a man below desired to speak with me. Upon my asking her who it was, she told me it was a very grave elderly person, but that she did not know his name. I immediately went down to him, and found him to be the coachman of my worthy friend Sir Roger de Coverley. He told me that his master came to town last night, and would be glad to take a turn with me in Gray's Inn walks. As I was wondering in myself what had brought Sir Roger to town, not having lately received any letter from him, he told me that his master was come up to get a sight of Prince Eugene,\* and that he desired I would immediately meet him.

I was not a little pleased with the curiosity of the old knight, though I did not much wonder at it, having heard him say more than once in private discourse, that he looked upon Prince Eugenio (for so the knight always calls him) to be a greater man than Scanderbeg.

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\* During the War of the Spanish Succession, Prince Eugene commanded the army of Italy. He afterward commanded the imperial army in Germany, and shared with the Duke of Marlborough the glory of his victories. He came to England in 1712 to urge the prosecution of the war against France, and to use his efforts to restore Marlborough to the queen's favor.

I was no sooner come into Gray's Inn walks but I heard my friend upon the terrace hemming twice or thrice to himself with great vigor; for he loves to clear his pipes in good air (to make use of his own phrase), and is not a little pleased with any one who takes notice of the strength which he still exerts in his morning hems.

I was touched with a secret joy at the sight of the good old man, who, before he saw me, was engaged in conversation with a beggar-man that had asked an alms of him. I could hear my friend chide him for not finding out some work; but at the same time saw him put his hand in his pocket, and give him sixpence.

Our salutations were very hearty on both sides, consisting of many kind shakes of the hand, and several affectionate looks which we cast upon one another. After which the knight told me my good friend his chaplain was very well, and much at my service; and that the Sunday before he had made a most incomparable sermon out of Dr. Barrow, "I have left," says he, "all my affairs in his hands; and being willing to lay an obligation upon him, have deposited with him thirty merks, to be distributed among his poor parishioners."

He then proceeded to acquaint me with the welfare of Will Wimble. Upon which he put his hand into his fob and presented me in his name with a tobacco-stopper, telling me that Will had been busy all the beginning of the winter in turning great quantities of them; and that he made a present of one to every gentleman in the country who has good principles, and smokes. He added, that poor Will was at present under great tribulation; for that Tom Touchy had taken the law of him for cutting some hazel sticks out of one of his hedges.

Among other pieces of news which the knight brought from his country-seat, he informed me that Moll White was dead; and that about a month after her death the wind was so very high, that it blew down the end of one of his barns



"But for my own part," says Sir Roger, "I do not think that the old woman had any hand in it."

He afterward fell into an account of the diversions which had passed in his house during the holidays; for Sir Roger, after the laudable custom of his ancestors, always keeps open house at Christmas. I learned from him that he had killed eight fat hogs for this season; that he had dealt about his chines very liberally among his neighbors; and that in particular he had sent a string of hog's puddings, with a pack of cards, to every poor family in the parish. "I have often thought," says Sir Roger, "it happens very well that Christmas should fall out in the middle of winter. It is the most dead, uncomfortable time of the year, when the poor people would suffer very much from their poverty and cold, if they had not good cheer, warm fires, and Christmas gambols to support them. I love to rejoice their poor hearts at this season, and to see the whole village merry in my great hall. I allow a double quantity of malt to my small beer, and set it a-running for twelve days to every one that calls for it. I have always a piece of cold beef and a mince pie on the table, and am wonderfully pleased to see my tenants pass away a whole evening in playing their innocent tricks, and smutting one another. Our friend Will Wimble is as merry as any of them, and shows a thousand roguish tricks upon these occasions."

I was very much delighted with the reflection of my old friend, which carried so much goodness in it. He then launched out into the praise of the late act of parliament for securing the Church of England, and told me, with great satisfaction, that he believed it already began to take effect; for that a rigid dissenter who chanced to dine at his house on Christmas day, had been observed to eat very plentifully of his plum porridge.

After having dispatched all our country matters, Sir Roger made several inquiries concerning the club, and particularly of his old antagonist, Sir Andrew Freeport. He asked me,

with a kind of smile, whether Sir Andrew had not taken the advantage of his absence to vent among them some of his republican doctrines; but soon after, gathering up his countenance into a more than ordinary seriousness, "Tell me truly," says he, "don't you think Sir Andrew had a hand in the pope's procession?"\* But without giving me time to answer him, "Well, well," says he, "I know you are a wary man, and do not care to talk of public matters."

The knight then asked me if I had seen Prince Eugenio, and made me promise to get him a stand in some convenient place, where he might have a full sight of that extraordinary man, whose presence does so much honor to the British nation. He dwelt very long on the praises of this great general; and I found that since I was with him in the country, he had drawn many observations together out of his reading in Baker's *Chronicle*, and other authors, who always lie in his hall window, which very much redound to the honor of this prince.

Having passed away the greatest part of the morning in hearing the knight's reflections, which were partly private and partly political, he asked me if I would smoke a pipe with him over a dish of coffee at Squire's.† As I love the old man, I take delight in complying with everything that is agreeable to him, and accordingly waited on him to the coffee-house, where his venerable figure drew upon us the eyes of the whole room. He had no sooner seated himself at the upper end of the high table, but he called for a clean pipe, a paper of tobacco, a dish of coffee, a wax candle, and the Supplement, with such an air of cheerfulness and good-humor, that all the boys in the coffee-room (who seemed to take pleasure in serving him) were at once employed on his several errands; insomuch that nobody else could come

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\* It was for many years the practice of the citizens of London, on the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession, to express their detestation of the Roman Church by a procession which paraded through the principal streets, bearing an effigy of the pope, which was afterward burned.

† A coffee-house frequented by the students of Gray's Inn.



at a dish of tea, until the knight had got all his conveniences about him.

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## XII. SIR ROGER'S VISIT TO WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

MY friend Sir Roger de Coverley told me the other night that he had been reading my paper upon Westminster Abbey, "in which," says he, "there are a great many ingenious fancies." He told me, at the same time, that he observed I had promised another paper upon the tombs, and that he should be glad to go and see them with me, not having visited them since he had read history. I could not at first imagine how this came into the knight's head, till I recollected that he had been very busy all last summer upon Baker's *Chronicle*, which he has quoted several times in his disputes with Sir Andrew Freeport since his last coming to town. Accordingly, I promised to call upon him the next morning, that we might go together to the Abbey.

I found the knight under the butler's hands, who always shaves him. He was no sooner dressed, than he called for a glass of the Widow Trueby's water,\* which he told me he always drank before he went abroad. He recommended to me a dram of it at the same time, with so much heartiness that I could not forbear drinking it. As soon as I had got it down, I found it very unpalatable; upon which the knight, observing that I had made several wry faces, told me that he knew I should not like it at first, but that it was the best thing in the world against the stone or gravel.

I could have wished, indeed, that he had acquainted me with the virtues of it sooner; but it was too late to complain, and I knew what he had done was out of good-will. Sir Roger told me further, that he looked upon it to be very good for a man while he staid in town, to keep off infection, and that he got together a quantity of it upon the first news

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\* "One of the innumerable 'strong waters' drunk, it is said (perhaps libellously), chiefly by the fair sex as an exhilarant; the excuses being the colic and 'the vapors.'"—*Wills*.



of the sickness being at Dantzic : when of a sudden, turning short to one of his servants, who stood behind him, he bid him call a hackney-coach, and take care it was an elderly man that drove it.

He then resumed his discourse upon Mrs. Trueby's water, telling me that the Widow Trueby was one who did more good than all the doctors and apothecaries in the county : that she distilled every poppy that grew within five miles of her ; that she distributed her medicine *gratis* among all sorts of people ; to which the knight added, that she had a very great jointure, and that the whole country would fain have it a match between him and her ; "and truly," says Sir Roger, "if I had not been engaged, perhaps I could not have done better."

His discourse was broken off by his man's telling him he had called a coach. Upon our going to it, after having cast his eye upon the wheels, he asked the coachman if his axle-tree was good. Upon the fellow's telling him he would warrant it, the knight turned to me, told me he looked like an honest man, and went in without further ceremony.

We had not gone far, when Sir Roger, popping out his head, called the coachman down from his box, and upon presenting himself at the window, asked him if he smoked. As I was considering what this would end in, he bid him stop by the way at any good tobacconist's, and take in a roll of their best Virginia. Nothing material happened in the remaining part of our journey, till we were set down at the west end of the Abbey.

As we went up the body of the church, the knight pointed at the trophies upon one of the new monuments, and cried out : "A brave man, I warrant him !" Passing afterward by Sir Cloudesley Shovel, he flung his hand that way, and cried : "Sir Cloudesley Shovel !\* a very gallant man !" As

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\* A distinguished British admiral, who was commander-in-chief in the reign of Queen Anne. Returning from Gibraltar, his ship was lost on the Scilly Isles, and all on board perished. His body was afterward found and interred in Westminster Abbey, where a monument was erected to his memory.

we stood before Busby's tomb, the knight uttered himself again after the same manner: "Dr. Busby!\* a great man! he whipped my grandfather; a very great man! I should have gone to him myself, if I had not been a blockhead; a very great man!"

We were immediately conducted into the little chapel on the right hand. Sir Roger, planting himself at our historian's elbow, was very attentive to everything he said, particularly to the account he gave us of the lord who had cut off the king of Morocco's head. Among several other figures, he was very well pleased to see the statesman Cecil upon his knees; and concluding them all to be great men, was conducted to the figure which represents that martyr to good housewifery, who died by the prick of a needle.† Upon our interpreter's telling us that she was a maid of honor to Queen Elizabeth, the knight was very inquisitive into her name and family; and after having regarded her finger for some time, "I wonder," says he, "that Sir Richard Baker has said nothing of her in his *Chronicle*."

We were then conveyed to the two coronation chairs, where my old friend, after having heard that the stone underneath the most ancient of them, which was brought from Scotland, was called Jacob's pillar, sat himself down in the chair; and looking like the figure of an old Gothic king, asked our interpreter: "What authority they had to say that Jacob had ever been in Scotland?" The fellow, instead of returning him an answer, told him "that he hoped his honor would pay his forfeit." I could observe Sir Roger a little ruffled upon being thus trepanned; but our guide not insisting upon his demand, the knight soon recovered his good-humor, and whispered in my ear, that if Will Wimble were with us, and saw those two chairs, it would go hard but he would get a tobacco-stopper out of one or t' other of them.

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\* For fifty-five years head-master of Westminster School.

† This is a popular error, originating from the position of the figure in the monument to Elizabeth, youngest daughter of Lord John Russell (A.D. 1584).



Sir Roger, in the next place, laid his hand upon Edward III.'s sword, and leaning upon the pommel of it, gave us the whole history of the Black Prince; concluding, that in Sir Richard Baker's opinion, Edward III. was one of the greatest princes that ever sat upon the English throne.

We were then shown Edward the Confessor's tomb; upon which Sir Roger acquainted us, that he was the first that touched for the evil: and afterward Henry IV.'s, upon which he shook his head, and told us there was fine reading of the casualties of that reign.

Our conductor then pointed to that monument where there is the figure of one of our English kings without an head;\* and upon giving us to know that the head, which was of beaten silver, had been stole away several years since: "Some Whig, I'll warrant you," says Sir Roger; "you ought to lock up your kings better; they will carry off the body too, if you do not take care."

The glorious names of Henry V. and Queen Elizabeth gave the knight great opportunities of shining, and of doing justice to Sir Richard Baker, "who," as our knight observed with some surprise, "had a great many kings in him, whose monuments he had not seen in the Abbey."

For my own part, I could not but be pleased to see the knight show such an honest passion for the glory of his country, and such a respectful gratitude to the memory of its princes.

I must not omit that the benevolence of my good old friend, which flows out toward every one he converses with, made him very kind to our interpreter, whom he looked upon as an extraordinary man, for which reason he shook him by the hand at parting, telling him, that he should be very glad to see him at his lodgings in Norfolk Buildings, and talk over these matters with him more at leisure.

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\* The effigy of Henry V.



## XIII. SIR ROGER AT THE THEATER.

MY friend Sir Roger de Coverley, when we last met together at the club, told me that he had a great mind to see the new tragedy with me, assuring me, at the same time, that he had not been at a play these twenty years. "The last I saw," said Sir Roger, "was *The Committee*,\* which I should not have gone to neither, had not I been told beforehand that it was a good Church-of-England comedy." He then proceeded to inquire of me who this *Distressed Mother*† was; and upon hearing that she was Hector's widow, he told me that her husband was a brave man; and that when he was a school-boy, he had read his life at the end of the Dictionary. My friend asked me, in the next place, if there would not be some danger in coming home late, in case the Mohocks‡ should be abroad. "I assure you," says he, "I thought I had fallen into their hands last night; for I observed two or three lusty black men that followed me half-way up Fleet Street, and mended their pace behind me in proportion as I put on to go away from them. You must know," continued the knight, with a smile, "I fancied they had a mind to hunt me; for I remember an honest gentleman in my neighborhood who was served such a trick in King Charles II.'s time, for which reason he has not ventured himself in town ever since. I might have shown them very good sport, had this been their design; for as I am an old fox-hunter, I should have turned and dodged, and have played them a thousand tricks they had never seen in their lives before." Sir Roger added, that if these gentlemen had any such intention, they did not succeed very well in it; "for I threw them out," says he, "at the end of Norfolk Street, where I doubled the corner, and got shelter in my lodgings before they could imagine what was become of me. However" says the knight, "if

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\* A comedy by Sir Robert Howard.

† By the poet Ambrose Philips, a friend of Addison.

‡ Dissolute young men, who amused themselves by fighting and maiming harmless people in the streets.

Captain Sentry will make one with us to-morrow night, and if you will both of you call upon me about four o'clock, that we may be at the house before it is full, I will have my coach in readiness to attend you; for John tells me he has got the fore-wheels mended."

The captain, who did not fail to meet me there at the appointed hour, bid Sir Roger fear nothing, for that he had put on the same sword which he made use of at the battle of Steenkirk.\* Sir Roger's servants, and among the rest my old friend the butler, had, I found, provided themselves with good oaken plants to attend their master upon this occasion. When we had placed him in his coach, with myself at his left hand, the captain before him, and his butler at the head of his footmen in the rear, we convoyed him in safety to the playhouse, where, after having marched up the entry in good order, the captain and I went in with him, and seated him betwixt us in the pit. As soon as the house was full, and the candles lighted, my old friend stood up and looked about him with that pleasure which a mind seasoned with humanity naturally feels in itself at the sight of a multitude of people who seem pleased with one another, and partake of the same common entertainment. I could not but fancy to myself, as the old man stood up in the middle of the pit, that he made a very proper center to a tragic audience. Upon the entering of Pyrrhus, the knight told me that he did not believe the king of France himself had a better strut. I was, indeed, very attentive to my old friend's remarks, because I looked upon them as a piece of natural criticism, and was well pleased to hear him, at the conclusion of almost every scene, telling me that he could not imagine how the play would end. One while he appeared much concerned for Andromache, and a little while after as much for Hermione, and was extremely puzzled to think what would become of Pyrrhus.

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\* In Belgium, where the English under William III. were defeated by the French in 1692.



When Sir Roger saw Andromache's obstinate refusal to her lover's importunities, he whispered me in the ear, that he was sure she would never have him; to which he added, with a more than ordinary vehemence: "You can't imagine, sir, what it is to have to do with a widow." Upon Pyrrhus his threatening afterward to leave her, the knight shook his head, and muttered to himself: "Ay, do if you can." This part dwelt so much upon my friend's imagination, that, at the close of the third act, as I was thinking of something else, he whispered me in my ear: "These widows, sir, are the most perverse creatures in the world. But pray," says he, "you that are a critic, is the play according to your dramatic rules, as you call them? Should your people in tragedy always talk to be understood? Why, there is not a single sentence in this play that I do not know the meaning of."

The fourth act very luckily began before I had time to give the old gentleman an answer. "Well," says the knight, sitting down with great satisfaction, "I suppose we are now to see Hector's ghost." He then renewed his attention, and from time to time fell a-praising the widow. He made, indeed, a little mistake as to one of her pages, whom, at his first entering, he took for Astyanax; but quickly set himself right in that particular, although he admitted that he should have been very glad to have seen the little boy; "who," says he, "must needs be a very fine child, by the account that is given of him." Upon Hermione's going off with a menace to Pyrrhus, the audience gave a loud clap, to which Sir Roger added: "On my word, a notable young baggage!"

As there was a very remarkable silence and stillness in the audience during the whole action, it was natural for them to take the opportunity of the intervals between the acts to express their opinion of the players, and of their respective parts. Sir Roger, hearing a cluster of them praise Orestes, struck in with them, and told them that he thought his friend Pylades was a very sensible man. As



they were afterward applauding Pyrrhus, Sir Roger put in a second time: "And let me tell you," says he, "though he speaks but little, I like the old fellow in whiskers as well as any of them." Captain Sentry, seeing two or three wags who sat near us, lean with an attentive ear toward Sir Roger, and fearing lest they should smoke\* the knight, plucked him by the elbow, and whispered something in his ear, that lasted till the opening of the fifth act. The knight was wonderfully attentive to the account which Orestes gives of Pyrrhus his death; and at the conclusion of it, told me it was such a bloody piece of work, that he was glad it was not done upon the stage. Seeing afterward Orestes in his raving fit, he grew more than ordinarily serious, and took occasion to moralize (in his way) upon an evil conscience, adding, that Orestes in his madness looked as if he saw something.

As we were the first that came into the house, so we were the last that went out of it, being resolved to have a clear passage for our old friend, whom we did not care to venture among the justling of the crowd. Sir Roger went out fully satisfied with his entertainment, and we guarded him to his lodgings in the same manner that we brought him to the playhouse; being highly pleased, for my own part, not only with the performance of the excellent piece which had been presented, but with the satisfaction it had given to the old man.

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#### XIV. SIR ROGER AT VAUXHALL.

As I was sitting in my chamber, and thinking on a subject for my next *Spectator*, I heard two or three irregular bounces at my landlady's door; and upon the opening of it, a loud cheerful voice inquiring whether the philosopher was at home. The child who went to the door answered very innocently that he did not lodge there. I immediately recollected that it was my good friend Sir Roger's voice, and that I had

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\* Sneer at, ridicule—an obsolete usage.

promised to go with him on the water to Spring Garden, in case it proved a good evening. The knight put me in mind of my promise from the staircase; but told me that if I was speculating, he would stay below till I had done. Upon my coming down, I found all the children of the family got about my old friend, and my landlady herself, who was a notable prating gossip, engaged in a conference with him; being mightily pleased with his stroking her little boy on the head, and bidding him be a good child, and mind his book.

We were no sooner come to the Temple stairs, but we were surrounded with a crowd of watermen, offering their respective services. Sir Roger, after having looked about him very attentively, spied one with a wooden leg, and immediately gave him orders to get his boat ready. As we were walking toward it, "You must know," says Sir Roger, "I never make use of anybody to row me that has not either lost a leg or an arm. I would rather bate him a few strokes of his oar than not employ an honest man that has been wounded in the queen's service. If I was a lord or a bishop, and kept a barge, I would not put a fellow in my livery that had not a wooden leg."

My old friend, after having seated himself, and trimmed the boat with his coachman, who being a very sober man, always serves for ballast on these occasions, we made the best of our way for Foxhall.\* Sir Roger obliged the waterman to give us the history of his right leg; and hearing that he had left it at La Hogue,† with many particulars which passed in that glorious action, the knight, in the triumph of his heart, made several reflections on the greatness of the British nation; as, that one Englishman could beat three Frenchmen; that we could never be in danger of popery so long as we took care of our fleet; that the Thames was the noblest river in Europe; that London Bridge was a greater piece of work than any of

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\* Afterward Vauxhall.

† On the north-west of France, off which the English gained a splendid victory over the French fleet in 1692.

the seven wonders of the world; with many other honest prejudices which naturally cleave to the heart of a true Englishman.

After some short pause, the old knight turning about his head twice or thrice, to take a survey of this great metropolis, bid me observe how thick the city was set with churches, and that there was scarce a single steeple on this side Temple Bar. "A most heathenish sight!" says Sir Roger: "there is no religion at this end of the town. The fifty new churches will very much mend the prospect; but church-work is slow, church-work is slow!"

I do not remember I have anywhere mentioned, in Sir Roger's character, his custom of saluting everybody that passes by him with a good-morrow, or a good-night. This the old man does out of the overflowings of his humanity, though at the same time it renders him so popular among all his country neighbors, that it is thought to have gone a good way in making him once or twice knight of the shire. He cannot forbear this exercise of benevolence even in town, when he meets with any one in his morning or evening walk. It broke from him to several boats that passed by us upon the water but to the knight's great surprise, as he gave the good-night to two or three young fellows a little before our landing, one of them, instead of returning the civility, asked us what queer old put\* we had in the boat, and whether he was not ashamed to go out at night at his years? with a great deal of the like Thames ribaldry. Sir Roger seemed a little shocked at first; but at length, assuming a face of magistracy, told us, "that if he were a Middlesex justice, he would make such vagrants know that her majesty's subjects were no more to be abused by water than by land."

We were now arrived at Spring Garden, which is exquisitely pleasant at this time of year. When I considered the fragrancy of the walks and bowers, with the choirs of birds that

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\* Rustic, clown—an obsolete word.



sung upon the trees, and the loose tribe of people that walked under their shades, I could not but look upon the place as a kind of Mahometan paradise. Sir Roger told me, it put him in mind of a little coppice by his house in the country, which his chaplain used to call an aviary of nightingales. "You must understand," says the knight, "there is nothing in the world that pleases a man in love so much as your nightingale. Ah, Mr. Spectator! the many moonlight nights that I have walked by myself, and thought on the widow by the music of the nightingale!" He here fetched a deep sigh, and was falling into a fit of musing, when a mask, who came behind him, gave him a gentle tap upon the shoulder, and asked him if he would drink a bottle of mead with her? But the knight, being startled at so unexpected familiarity, and displeased to be interrupted in his thoughts of the widow, told her she was a wanton baggage, and bid her go about her business.

We concluded our walk with a glass of Burton ale and a slice of hung beef. When we had done eating ourselves, the knight called a waiter to him and bid him carry the remainder to the waterman that had but one leg. I perceived the fellow stared upon him at the oddness of the message, and was going to be saucy; upon which I ratified the knight's commands with a peremptory look.

As we were going out of the garden, my old friend thinking himself obliged, as a member of the quorum, to animadvert upon the morals of the place, told the mistress of the house, who sat at the bar, that he should be a better customer to her garden, if there were more nightingales and fewer bad characters.

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#### XV. DEATH OF SIR ROGER.

WE last night received a piece of ill news at our club, which very sensibly afflicted every one of us. I question not but my readers themselves will be troubled at the hearing of it. To keep them no longer in suspense, Sir Roger de Coverley is

dead. He departed this life at his house in the country, after a few weeks' sickness. Sir Andrew Freeport has a letter from one of his correspondents in those parts, that informs him the old man caught a cold at the county-sessions, as he was very warmly promoting an address of his own penning, in which he succeeded according to his wishes. But this particular comes from a Whig justice of peace, who was always Sir Roger's enemy and antagonist. I have letters both from the chaplain and Captain Sentry, which mention nothing of it, but are filled with many particulars to the honor of the good old man. I have likewise a letter from the butler, who took so much care of me last summer when I was at the knight's house. As my friend the butler mentions, in the simplicity of his heart, several circumstances the others have passed over in silence, I shall give my reader a copy of his letter, without any alteration or diminution.

“HONORED SIR—Knowing that you was my old master's good friend, I could not forbear sending you the melancholy news of his death, which has afflicted the whole country as well as his poor servants, who loved him, I may say, better than we did our lives. I am afraid he caught his death at the last county-sessions, where he would go to see justice done to a poor widow woman and her fatherless children, that had been wronged by a neighboring gentleman; for you know, my good master was always the poor man's friend. Upon his coming home, the first complaint he made was, that he had lost his roast-beef stomach, not being able to touch a sirloin which was served up according to custom; and you know he used to take great delight in it. From that time forward he grew worse and worse, but still kept a good heart to the last. Indeed, we were once in great hope of his recovery, upon a kind message that was sent him from the widow lady whom he had made love to the forty last years of his life; but this only proved a lightning before his death. He has bequeathed to this lady, as a token of his love, a



great pearl necklace, and a couple of silver bracelets set with jewels, which belonged to my good old lady his mother. He has bequeathed the fine white gelding that he used to ride a-hunting upon to his chaplain, because he thought he would be kind to him; and has left you all his books. He has moreover bequeathed to the chaplain a very pretty tenement, with good lands about it. It being a very cold day when he made his will, he left for mourning, to every man in the parish, a great frieze coat, and to every woman a black riding-hood. It was a moving sight to see him take leave of his poor servants, commending us all for our fidelity, while we were not able to speak a word for weeping. As we most of us are grown gray-headed in our dear master's service, he has left us pensions and legacies, which we may live very comfortably upon the remaining part of our days. He has bequeathed a great deal more in charity, which is not yet come to my knowledge; and it is peremptorily said in the parish that he has left money to build a steeple to the church; for he was heard to say some time ago, that if he lived two years longer, Coverley church should have a steeple to it. The chaplain tells everybody he made a very good end, and never speaks of him without tears. He was buried, according to his own directions, among the family of the Coverleys, on the left hand of his father Sir Arthur. The coffin was carried by six of his tenants, and the pall held up by six of the quorum. The whole parish followed the corpse with heavy hearts, and in their mourning suits; the men in frieze, and the women in riding-hoods. Captain Sentry, my master's nephew, has taken possession of the Hall-house and the whole estate. When my old master saw him a little before his death, he shook him by the hand, and wished him joy of the estate which was falling to him, desiring him only to make a good use of it, and to pay the several legacies and the gifts of charity, which he told him he had left as quit-rents upon the estate. The captain truly seems a courteous man, though he says but little. He makes much of those whom my master



loved, and shows great kindness to the old house-dog that you know my poor master was so fond of. It would have gone to your heart to have heard the moans the dumb creature made on the day of my master's death. He has never joyed himself since; no more has any of us. It was the melancholiest day for the poor people that ever happened in Worcestershire. This is all from, honored sir, your most sorrowful servant,

EDWARD BISCUIT.

*P.S.*—My master desired, some weeks before he died, that a book, which comes up to you by the carrier, should be given to Sir Andrew Freeport in his name."

This letter, notwithstanding the poor butler's manner of writing it, gave us such an idea of our good old friend, that upon the reading of it there was not a dry eye in the club. Sir Andrew opening the book, found it to be a collection of acts of parliament. There was in particular the Act of Uniformity, with some passages in it marked by Sir Roger's own hand. Sir Andrew found that they related to two or three points which he had disputed with Sir Roger the last time he appeared at the club. Sir Andrew, who would have been merry at such an incident on another occasion, at the sight of the old man's writing burst into tears, and put the book in his pocket. Captain Sentry informs me that the knight has left rings and mourning for every one in the club.



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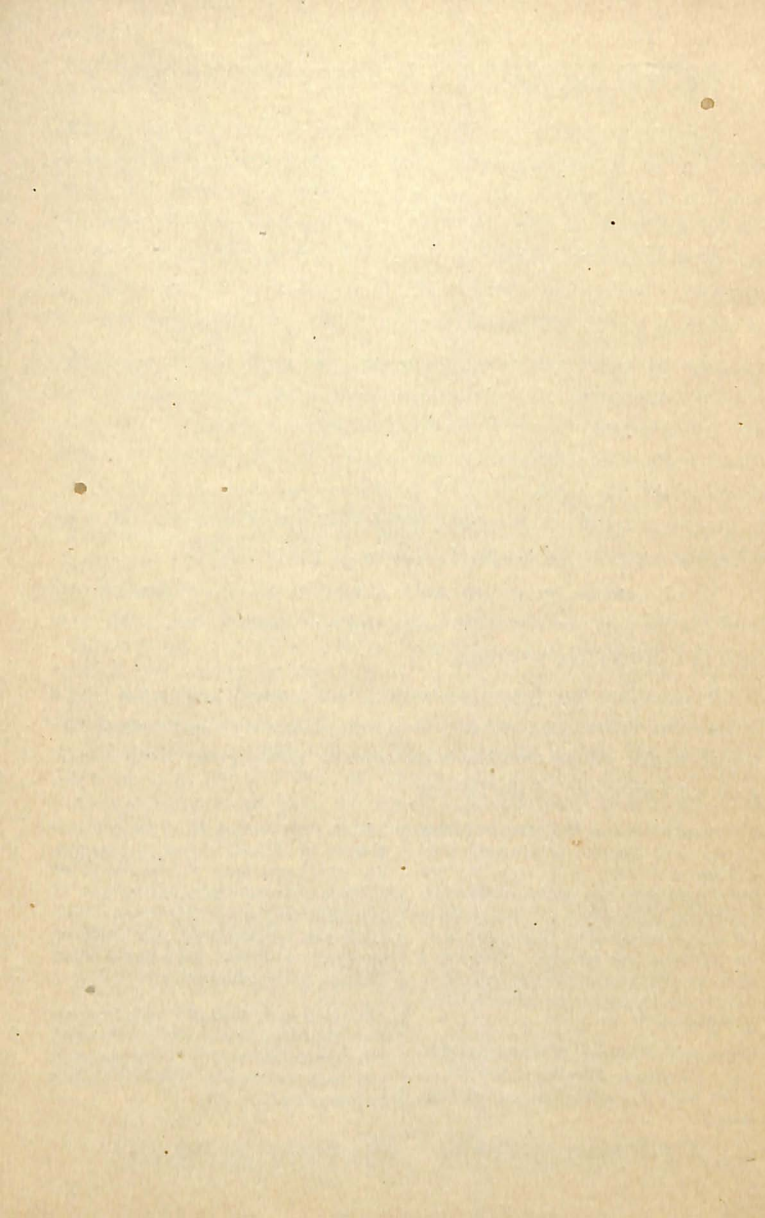
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